

**MD-453**  
**Somerset County**

**CHESAPEAKE WOOD TREATING SITE**  
**Pocomoke, Maryland**

***Site Location***

The inactive Chesapeake Plywood facility was one of three modules comprising the original Chesapeake Wood Treating site. The site is located in Pocomoke City in southern Somerset County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The site covers approximately 2.0 acres on the west side of U.S. Route 13, just north of the Pocomoke River. Pocomoke City lies just across the river to the southeast.

The site consisted of: (a) a 1-story steel structure approximately 200 feet by 250 feet that housed a plywood production operation, (b) a series of concrete bins that housed logs to be made into plywood, (c) a series of non-contact cooling water holding ponds, (d) paved and gravel parking lots and roadways, and (e) associated sheds housing groundwater recovery pumps.

***Site History***

Before 1965, the Chesapeake Wood Treating site was used for residential and farming purposes. In 1965, Chesapeake Bay Plywood, Inc. purchased the site from private parties, constructed a chip mill and began operating a plywood facility soon after. The mill received tree-length stems by truck, cut off peeler logs for the wood plant and chipped the rest. The chipped material was moved by barge to a paper mill in West Point, Virginia. On the return trip, the barges brought peeler logs to Pocomoke when they were available. A new chip mill was erected on the site in 1991.

The plywood facility generated waste phenolic formaldehyde resin glue that hardened into a solid form. During the period it operated (1965 to 1987), the plywood facility purportedly disposed of the hard resin three times: in the mid 1970s, in 1985-1986 and when the operation closed in 1987. The last disposal consisted of 42 cubic yards of waste material placed in a municipal landfill.

1965	Chesapeake Bay Plywood purchased the site.
mid-1970s	Purported disposal of hard resin waste.
1985-1986	Purported disposal of hard resin waste.
1987	Plywood facility closed with RCRA oversight.
	Final disposal of hard resin waste at landfill.
1988	Chesapeake Wood Treating Company purchased inactive site.
1990	MDE apprized of buried drums of CCA waste.
1991	New chip mill erected.
1992	MDE requested EPA to place facility on the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System list.
1993	Universal Companies, Inc. purchased the wood treatment facility.
	Preliminary Assessment prepared; MDE found no on-site contaminated soils or significant waste disposal areas and identified no sources of groundwater or surface water contamination.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) documents indicate that wastes generated by closure of the plywood facility in 1987 were properly disposed. Asbestos and all electrical equipment containing or contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls were properly removed from the site. Underground storage tanks were removed in coordination with the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Oil Control Program.

In 1988, the Chesapeake Wood Treating Company purchased the inactive Chesapeake Plywood, Inc. site. Thus Chesapeake Corporation, the parent company, owned and operated three adjacent facilities: the plywood operation, the wood chipping operation, and the copper chromated arsenic (CCA) wood treating operation.

In November 1990, the MDE was apprized that drums of CCA waste reportedly were moved from the wood treatment area to the wood chipping area and buried as a means of disposal when the wood treatment plant ceased operations. The wood treatment plant and the potential burial of CCA waste are being addressed by RCRA enforcement officials.

Universal Companies, Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan purchased the wood treatment facility from Chesapeake Corporation in 1993 and planned at that time to close the plant.

## ***Environmental Investigations***

On March 27, 1992, MDE's Waste Management Administration requested that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as a result of a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act site discovery efforts, place the Chesapeake Wood Treating Company on the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System list.

In November 1993, MDE's Waste Management Administration conducted a *Preliminary Assessment* of the plywood facility to collect sufficient information about the site to evaluate the potential for release of hazardous waste from the site. On the basis of the Preliminary Assessment, MDE concluded that there were significant targets associated with the site. Over 6,000 people relied on groundwater within four miles of the site. Over 25 miles of wetlands frontage on the surface water pathway contained several endangered species, a unique ecosystem, a state forest, and known fisheries and hunting grounds.

MDE reported, however, that no actual sources were identified that could contribute to groundwater or surface water contamination and noted that no contaminated soils or significant waste disposal areas were found on the site. MDE reported that it suspected no release of hazardous substances to the air from the Chesapeake Plywood site. MDE concluded that no evidence was found that suggested a release of the resin glue, the primary potential contaminant, to the environment, although the burial of the primary waste could not be ruled out entirely because the adjoining sister facility was suspected of questionable waste disposal practices.

## ***Current Status***

This site is on the State Master List that identifies potential hazardous waste sites in Maryland. The Master List includes sites currently identified by the EPA's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System. EPA has given the site a designation of No Further Remedial Action Planned. The designation of No Further Remedial Action Planned by EPA does not mean that MDE has reached the same conclusion concerning further investigation at the site. The information contained in the fact sheet presents a summary of past investigations and site conditions currently known to MDE.

## ***Facility Contact***

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